

Second Stone

JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 1993

ISSUE #26

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Volunteers bring faith and mortar; leave buildings

BY CANDACE CHELLEW
and JIM BAILEY

Residents of a poor community in the Dominican Republic have a new worship facility thanks to labor donated by a group of 18 volunteers from the Atlanta-based World Community Builders. The group returned Nov. 30 after spending ten days assembling donated construction material into a worship structure in El Tamarindo, a small village adjacent to the capitol city of Santo Domingo.

The ministry of World Community Builders is carried out through missionary work camps, where volunteers offer their labor to help people in a foreign culture with a construction project. Local leaders determine the work to be done, which may be construction of a church, school, clinic or orphanage, the refurbishing of an existing structure, or assisting a community clean up and recover after a natural disaster. The organization is affiliated with the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

The organization's name was chosen to reflect the

SEE COVER STORY, Page 10



MAKING A DIFFERENCE:

WCB volunteer Helene Loper helps lay the foundation for a building in a village in the Dominican Republic.

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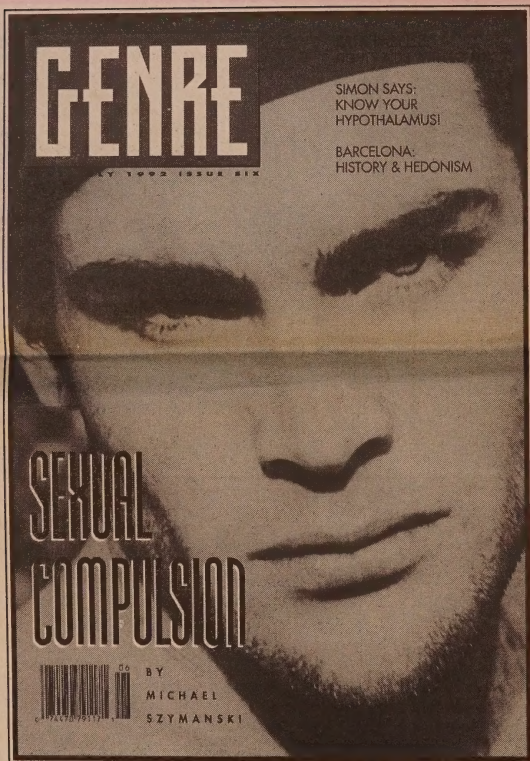
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From the Editor

We begin our focus on community

WITH THIS EDITION, we begin a series of issues, perhaps all six for this year, which will focus on community. I extend my call from the Nov/Dec issue for your input on what community means to you - how you or people you know are connected in some way to others in the gay community; how you live and love together, and how you work toward common goals.

Our first look at building community is a report on a group that actually took that concept as its name - World Community Builders. Members of this organization have just returned from the Dominican Republic where they volunteered their time and labor to build the first MCC church structure there. More such missionary work camps are planned. (For information contact WCB, 1120 Morley Ave., S.E., Atlanta, GA 30312.) We also report on two Sacramento agencies who are helping people who are suffering with AIDS - and are homeless. And then there is the story of Hutsville, a community of homeless living in make shift huts in Atlanta. Within that community there is another - homeless Gays who have taken up residence at Hutsville. You'll be wondering what you can do for these folks as you read this article. And then there's the surprising epilogue.

Introducing *Second Stone's* Community Forum

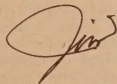
REV. STEVE FUND, director of World Community Builders, says his organization came about as the result of a conversation with friends. Great accomplishments always have their roots in a few people getting together and discussing ideas. When was the last time you got together with a few people just for the purpose of discussing ideas and concerns? With the belief that one person can make a significant difference in a community (and that that person is you) and that great things do happen when caring people get together, *Second Stone* in this issue puts forth our idea for community building... *Second Stone's* Community Forum. Modeled after *Utne Reader's* Neighborhood Salons, our Community Forum is an opportunity for one person - you - to connect a group of gay and lesbian Christians in your community. The result may simply be good conversation; it may mean the end of isolation for someone you reach out to; the result may even be a project like World Community Builders (and your photo on the cover of *Second Stone*?)

There may not be a place in your community where people can come together just to talk and exchange ideas. Try putting a community forum together. My feeling is that there are people in your community who will be responsive - and appreciative! *Second Stone* will help you every step of the way. (See page 16 about getting started.) We will have followup reports (including what you tell us about your forum) and recommendations in issues to follow.

Your mailbox is our "suggestion box"

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My very best to you during the new year!



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PUBLISHED/EDITOR: Jim Bailey

CONTRIBUTORS FOR THIS ISSUE: Andrea L. T. Peterson, Mayne Ellis,

Johnny Townsend, Kevin Calegari, Candace Chellev

NOTE: The article "Uncle Fred's Ministry" in the Nov/Dec, 1992, issue was edited

without the permission of the author.

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Unity is on the way

By Rev. Samuel Kader

Guest comment

For a few decades now, the gay and lesbian Christian community has acknowledged Isaiah 56:3-5 as a prophetic word regarding sexual minorities. When the Bible mentions sexual minorities it is not the arsenokoitae of I Cor. 6:9 (abusers of themselves with mankind) referred to, but the eunuchs of Matthew 19:12 and Isaiah 56:3. The eunuch of Isaiah would try to say, "Behold I am a dry tree."

Over centuries of oppression the person of non-mainstream sexual orientation begins to feel they've been shut out of the church, and therefore, spiritually speaking, are a dry tree. They feel they will just wither and die since so little of their contribution to the church is accepted when their secret is out. So often they are outright rejected as persons of value and worn when their orientation is known.

But for 25 years or so, God has been faithful to the promise to "pour out My Spirit on all flesh." Not only has there been revival in the non-gay community during this century but *all flesh* has been included as the Holy Spirit has brought revival in the gay community as well. From Isaiah 56:3-5 over the last 25 years, the eunuch has grabbed the promise

which says, "I will give them a name which is better than that of sons and daughters. Sons and daughters are identified as the traditional non-gay church members. We have been comforted thinking somehow God has seen our plight and one day God will give us a name better than that of our oppressors. We have waited and waited and waited."

In the meantime, in the rest of the church world, the promise has been that the miracles of the book of Acts and in the Gospels would be restored

crusades took place in North America and other parts of the world as well. But unlike in the Gospels, when Jesus had compassion on the multitudes and healed them all, not every person received a physical healing. Some died. And in the last 20 years people have been asking God, "When will you do it again, like in the book of Acts?" One major key, however, was that in the book of Acts, the believers were all in one accord.

Does it seem like a miracle today

first disciples, "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold." "Them also I must bring in, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16). He also revealed that when the church comes together in unity (John 17:21) then revival would break out globally because the world would believe that God sent Jesus.

So the promise to the eunuch to have a name better than that of sons and daughters is not isolated and separated from sons and daughters. For it also declares in Isaiah 56:5 to the eunuchs who take hold of my covenant, that "even unto them will I give in my house and within my walls a place and a name better than that of sons and daughters. The name God gives us is not separated but within the confines of the church. Amazing? Too impossible? Amos 3:7 says the Lord God will do nothing in the earth except He reveals it to His servants the prophets. So what are the prophets saying?

On February 28, 1989, on the Trinity Broadcasting Network, Rev. Benny Hinn, pastor of the several thousand member Orlando Christian Center in Orlando, Florida, stated that God showed him that the largest revival to ever hit the earth was going to come to our planet, splashing on every continent. He said that

SEE COMMENT, Page 20

This same pastor from Pittsburgh told the pentecostal pastors assembled in Dayton that he had a problem with people making statements like "if God doesn't judge San Francisco for its homosexuality, He'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah..."

to the church. We likewise have held to that promise, and expect AIDS and the other enemies of God to be made God's footstool, to be put under the feet of the church, Christ's body.

Beginning in the late 1940's through the 1970's great healing

for the church to ever be in one accord? People do not come into unity about various doctrines, and styles of worship. Yet they do come together in the true church, around the person of Jesus.

As a result, Jesus declared to the

The exultant misdiagnosis

By Johnny Townsend

Guest comment

On a *Donahue* show discussing the marriage of two Lesbians in Austin, Texas, a woman in the audience stood up to declare to the couple in front of a nationwide audience, "I think you're sick!" Then, smiling broadly, she sat down again. The camera focused on her for several more seconds and returned to her briefly a few more times during the show. Always, she was smiling triumphantly.

My question is if she really believes her own opinion, why is she smiling? What decent person would go up to someone and, smiling happily, say, "You have leprosy!" or "I think you have cancer!" or "I know the truth! You have the flu!" If these people who claim to sincerely believe homosexuality is an illness are in fact sincere, what does the fact that they're gleeful about their opinion say about them?

A "Christian" on the same show insisted that he loved Gays and Lesbians, but that out of love he was also obligated to tell them the truth. Is this love the basis for the smirking expressions of those who are sensitive and honest enough to know and declare the truth? If the smile means, "I'm so good and clever to have figured this out," isn't the focus on the wrong person?

Let's imagine this scene: a woman goes from doctor to doctor with her puzzling symptoms. No one can find anything wrong. They tell her, in fact, that she is fine. But eventually one doctor does find something wrong with her, by virtue of being more clever than the other doctors. "My dear," she says, smiling warmly, "I'm happy to say I've discovered the problem. You have an incurable, terminal illness." And she smiles even more broadly and sits down without another word.

How would we feel if a doctor gave us his diagnosis in this fashion?

Now let's consider a different

situation. A woman feels perfectly healthy, but she has some odd symptom. Perhaps she has gone prematurely gray at the age of 20. She dyes her hair for a few years so no one will know, but eventually just lets the natural color show. Some think she looks "handsome," while others think she looks awful. Some tell her that it's simply a natural phenomenon which happens to some people. But one woman, with absolutely no medical training, stops her on the street and insists majestically, "I think you're sick!" and walks off, smiling as if she'd just won an award.

There are really two issues here. The first is that it's awfully hard for Gays and Lesbians to believe they're sick when they feel fine, and the second is that it's hard for them to accept that critics truly believe they're ill either when they announce their diagnosis in such an odd manner. In fact, Gays and Lesbians are downright mystified that heterosexuals can believe such a ridiculous tactic could have any effect on them. And they

wonder if helping them is really a goal for these exultant quacks in the first place.

If "helping the sick" is truly the motive for the diagnosis, perhaps these self-appointed physicians need to learn a more appropriate bedside manner. After all, it's useless to have knowledge that will never reach the patient because the patient can find no way to trust the doctor.

But still I can see the exultant face of the woman on the *Donahue* show, the face of someone who believed she'd actually done something positive by making her claim. Was she smiling victoriously because she had really done anything useful? Or was she just happy that she had a way of "proving" her superiority, of congratulating herself on her own sexual orientation, over which she had no control? The questions raised by smiling critics are intriguing. But almost none of the answers are helpful to anyone at all.

News Lines

Presbyterian leader predicts ordination of gay ministers

ANON-CELIBATE GAYS AND LESBIANS will likely be admitted to ordained ministry in the Presbyterian Church some time this year, the head of the denomination predicted. The Rev. John Fife, the church's highest elected official, said the decision denying Rev. Jane Spahr the pastorate of a Rochester, N.Y., church would lead to a re-examination of a 14-year-old church policy barring sexually active Gays and Lesbians from ordination. If the policy doesn't change, Fife said "Presbyterians are only going to be the know-nothing party of prayer." He made the comments while addressing students and faculty at Princeton Theological Seminary.

-The Star-Ledger

Virginia Baptists won't exclude Gays

A CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA'S Southern Baptists have decided that the denomination should reach out to Gays and Lesbians. Representatives at the association's two day meeting rejected an amendment that would have excluded churches that confirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior. -Associated Press

Christian, Jewish leaders: End military ban

AL EADERS OF THREE Christian denominations and a Jewish organization are urging President-elect Bill Clinton to follow through on a campaign promise to end the ban on Gays and Lesbians in the armed services. In an open letter to Clinton, United Church of Christ President Paul H. Sherry wrote, "Refusal to induct a person into the military, or discharge of a person, solely on the basis of sexual orientation, is intolerable." President C. William Nichols of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church's ecumenical partner, endorsed the letter, as did Bishop Melvin G. Talbert of the United Methodist Church and Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The letter says the military's policy of discrimination based on sexual orientation plays on the prejudices of civilians, encouraging "other acts of discrimination against gay and lesbian persons in our society which, at times, have led to harassment, violence, even death." The religious leaders commended Clinton's "courageous commitment to end injustice in the military with regard to Gays and Lesbians." They added "we encourage you to fulfill your pledge as quickly and as clearly as possible following your inauguration."

Southern Baptists ask Clinton to rethink stand on gay rights

ASOUTHERN BAPTISTS oppose a public policy that would add sexual orientation as a protected status under civil rights laws, the head of the convention's ethics agency said in a letter to Bill Clinton. "We fear the wrath of God on our nation if our government pursues this path," said Richard Land, director of the convention's Christian Life Commission, in a letter to the president-elect on Nov. 12. -Associated Press

Seven major demands outlined by March committee

ATHE SEVEN MAJOR DEMANDS for the 1993 March on Washington were presented by the Executive Committee at the National Steering Committee meeting held in Denver on October 3 & 4. The demands bring focus and priority to the '93 March agenda. "The demands prioritize our fight for civil rights, access to health care, recognition of our family relationships, our rightful inclusion in educational systems as well as our commitment to fight racism and sexism," said a spokesperson for the committee.

Gay-friendly church censured

ATHE ORGANIZATION THAT GOVERNS Presbyterian churches in the Cincinnati area has censured a church that permits Gays and Lesbians to become deacons and elders. Leaders of the Presbytery voted by a margin of nearly 2-1 to censure the Mount Auburn Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Harold Porter, pastor of Mount Auburn, said the church rule forbidding the use of Gays and Lesbians in church leadership is unjust and demeaning. -Associated Press

NC Baptists uphold decision to oust churches

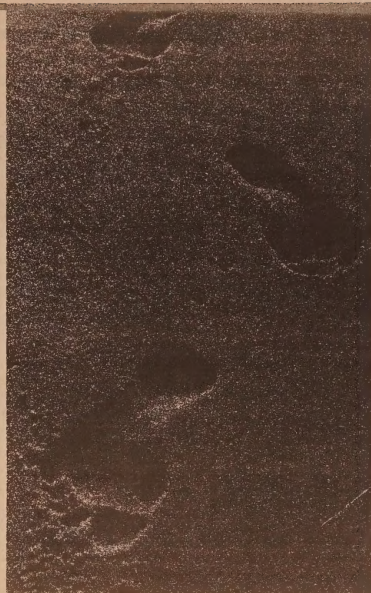
ADELEGATES TO THE North Carolina Baptist State Convention's annual session voted overwhelmingly Nov. 10 to reaffirm a decision by its governing board to exclude Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, and Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, for affirming the worth of gay and lesbian people. Speaking against the motion, Tim Moore of Shamrock Drive Baptist Church in Charlotte reminded members that the convention once excluded black churches. -Associated Press

Malta Catholic priest suppressed for views

FATHER MARK MONTEBELLO, 29, a Dominican priest who said in a radio broadcast that Christ should have experienced the state of marriage for himself and that if homosexual couples loved each other in the same way as heterosexuals they should also be allowed to marry, has been banned by his Roman Catholic superiors from speaking or writing about his views. Church officials said Montebello had drawn the prohibition for what officials said was misrepresenting church teachings, distorting biblical facts and scandalizing his audience. -GayNet

Norwegian politician comes out

ANDERS GAASLAND, the 24-year-old leader of the youth organization of Norway's anti-gay Christian Democratic Party, came out on a national television news broadcast October 17. Gaasland said he wanted to come out so he could help others in the same situation as himself, an ambiguous statement that may have meant that other lesbian and gay politicians in the country should follow his example and come out as well. The Christian Democratic Party makes a distinction between sexual orientation and sexual behavior in supporting or opposing rights measures, a distinction Gaasland said is "artificial" in his eight-minute TV talk. "If you take away a person's possibility to love someone, there isn't much left," he said. -GayNet



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Integrity calls for replacement of NCC delegates

ATHE NATIONAL BOARD of Integrity, in a special meeting on December 3, called for the immediate replacement of the Rev. William Norgren as Ecumenical Officer of the Episcopal Church and the replacement of four other members of the Episcopal delegation to the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA with, among others, "persons with ecumenical experience who are active in lesbian ministries in the Episcopal Church." Integrity's board also dissociated itself from the action by the majority of the Episcopal delegation who opposed granting observer status in the NCCUSA for the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. Norgren was the only representative from a mainline denomination to speak in opposition to UFMCC's application. Integrity claims that the delegation's vote violates "the stated and authoritative goal of the [Episcopal] church" which is to encourage dialogue with the lesbian and gay community. The Episcopal delegation at the NCCUSA ignored the mandates of several General Conventions encouraging dialogue, the Integrity resolution said.

Gay help not needed, says Nashville organization

ΔAN ORGANIZATION of NASHVILLE churches has rejected the membership bid of a small congregation of gay and lesbian people. "Basically, we were taking the position that the practice of homosexuality isn't consistent with Christianity," said the Rev. Bob Jared, president of the East Nashville Cooperative Ministry board of directors. Jack Gregory, a leader of the congregation of Dayspring Christian Fellowship, said the group had sought membership to help with the organization's social work, but that Dayspring accepted the group's decision and does not want to start a controversy.

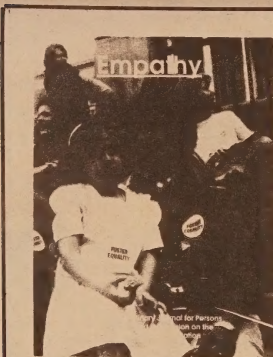
-Associated Press

Far right working on new anti-gay measures

ΔFAR-RIGHT LEADERS connected with Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition have made it clear that Colorado's newly passed anti-gay Amendment 2 has become the model for a state-by-state campaign that may eclipse abortion as its premiere issue for the next several years. -GayNet

No gay unions, Episcopal clergy says

ΔBISHOP A. THEODORE EASTMAN, head of the Episcopal Church in Maryland, has ordered the clergy not to follow the example of the Rev. William W. Rich, who blessed the union of two women in a ceremony last summer. "Because the Episcopal Church has made no official provision for the blessing of same-gender covenants, and because there is clearly no consensus locally or on the wider scene about the significance of these rites, I have directed the clergy of the Diocese of Maryland to refrain from such blessings," Eastman said. The Rev. William N. McKeachie, rector of Old St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Baltimore, criticized the bishop's reaction, saying that Eastman should have more strongly condemned the union. -Baltimore Alternative



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* Rev. Malcolm Boyd, author of 23 books including *Are You Running with Me, Jesus? Take Off the Mask*, and *Gay Priest*

Empathy provides a much-needed and welcomed communication link for persons involved in education about homophobia. At its best it will keep us informed and in touch, supported and challenged, excited and proud.

* Brian McNaught, lecturer and author of *On Being Gay: Thoughts on Family, Faith, and Love*

Helms, Wildmon attack AIDS project

ΔPROJECT ARIES, a telephone counseling service and research program out of the University of Washington, Seattle, is under attack by right wing activists who are portraying the program as a federally funded phone sex line for gay and bisexual men. The program targets men who continue to have unsafe sex despite the risk of contracting HIV or transmitting the virus to their partners. In September, 1991, Project Aries received a \$2 million grant from the National Institutes of Mental Health. A right wing newspaper in New York, *The New York Guardian*, ran a September cover story calling the program a "homosexual hotline." The article quoted Rev. Donald Wildmon, president of the American Family Association, who said about the project, "If it wasn't so serious it would be funny. The National Institutes of Health is part of the homosexual lobby like PBS and the NEA, a lobby that has extraordinary influence in the media and the highest levels of government."

Pentagon nixes gay chaplains

ΔTHE PENTAGON DEFERRED action on a request by the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches to have chaplains in the U.S. armed forces until the church presents a candidate who is heterosexual. The church's current candidate, the Rev. Carolyn D. Pruitt, was dismissed from the Army after announcing that she is lesbian. -The Lutheran

Michigan bishop warns pastors

ΔLESS THAN TWO MONTHS after taking office, Donald Ott, Michigan United Methodist Bishop, has barred his clergy from blessing gay couples. At the same time he urged his church to continue its discussions on the issue. Bishop Ott banned his clergy from conducting "an event in which a public covenant is made between same-sex people, akin to marriage, implying blessing or endorsement." Ott also informed the clergy that he expects them to call him or their District Superintendent if they are considering attending or taking part in any kind of blessing. He said that the was trying to set up some clear boundaries for his clergy as the church continues its discussions on gay and lesbian issues within the denomination. -Cruise

Clergy group opens dialogue on gay issues

ΔA CLERGY ASSOCIATION in Charlotte, North Carolina, has met with Gays and Lesbians to dialogue on issues that have separated the two groups. Rev. Dick Little, of Advent Lutheran Church, said that the decision to begin such dialogue sprang from last year's Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays' International Convention held in Charlotte. Rev. Jimmy Creech, a heterosexual minister from Raleigh who was removed from his church for supporting Gays and Lesbians, encouraged the local ministers to meet with the gay and lesbian community. Charlotte Area Clergy Association member Rev. William Medlin said of the meeting, "We can't be in ministry and stand in judgment at the same time. We have to choose." -QNotes

Anti-gay activist links gay rights with Dahmer

ΔA VIRGINIA ANTI-GAY ACTIVIST has kicked off his latest national "Emergency Campaign" to stop the lesbian and gay rights bill, this time linking gay rights to the crimes of mass murderer Jeffrey Dahmer and accused Philadelphia sex offender Ed Savitz. Longtime anti-gay fundraiser Eugene Delgaudio issued his six-page direct mail assault on lesbian and gay Americans under the banner of his Virginia-based Public Advocate of the U.S. The right-wing organization was responsible for the abundant signs on the floor of the Republican National Convention proclaiming "Family Rights Forever, 'Gay' Rights Never." Delgaudio said that if the "twisted bill" becomes law, "radical homosexuals and lesbians will be free to prey on small children to replenish the 'homosexual community.'" -Baltimore Alternative

Falwell may revive Moral Majority

ΔADDRESSING A GROUP of evangelical ministers in Burlingame, Calif., Jerry Falwell said that if President Clinton fulfills his campaign promises to lift the ban on Gays and Lesbians in the military, to sign a federal gay rights bill and to support pro-choice legislation, he may revive the now-defunct Moral Majority. Falwell said the country is "on the verge of moral collapse" and made it clear that his decision will depend on how the Clinton administration deals with the nation's social issues. -GayNet

New Catholic catechism urges respect for Gays

ΔTHE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in November unveiled a new catechism that is more tolerant of homosexuality. Seven years in the making, the new catechism follows traditional teachings in condemning homosexual acts and in instructing Gays to practice chastity. But it adds that since most Gays do not willingly choose their sexual orientation, they "must be welcomed with respect, compassion and delicacy." The 676-page book continues, "One must avoid all unjust discrimination against them." It is the first new catechism since 1566. -The Lutheran

Far right suffers setback in California assembly races

ΔACAPITOL COMMONWEALTH GROUP's big bucks strategy failed in the effort to win California Assembly seats for candidates who are committed to the agenda of the theocratic religious right. Of the 20 Republican candidates backed and bankrolled by the group, only six won election to the Assembly. The election cost the Capital Commonwealth Group, which in May became the Allied Business PAC, at least \$2 million. Rev. Jerry Sloan, Co-Chair of Project Tocsin, said, "While we're pleased with the results of the election, we hope people will not be lulled into a false sense of security. Our people need to realize that the theocratic right will not be deterred by this election setback. They're like chameleons which change colors to fit their surroundings."

Politically incorrect anthology seeks submissions

ΔWERE NOT WHO YOU THINK, an anthology for those who feel excluded because of beliefs or affiliations, is seeking submissions from Gays and Lesbians who are "not all Democrats, vegetarians, or Queer Nation members." For information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 2745, Quincy, MA 02269.

Clinton: Victory not possible without gay, lesbian support

WASHINGTON, D.C. - To the wild applause of gay, lesbian and bisexual activists from around the country, Bill Clinton, in a letter of support, acknowledged his debt to the gay community and thanked gay voters for making his presidential campaign victory possible. The surprise Clinton letter was read by former National Gay and Lesbian Task Force chief Urvashi Vaid at the opening of the 1992 NGLTF Policy Institute Creating Change Conference. The 5th annual

conference was held in Los Angeles, Nov. 13-15.

"To my friends at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force," said Clinton in his letter, "...Hillary and I would like to thank you all for the hard work you have done for the advancement of human rights for gay and lesbian people everywhere. It is an inspiration to us all.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to thank every one of

you for your tremendous support during our campaign for change - without your support our victory on November 3rd would not have been possible. I now ask you again for your help and support in implementing the changes that are needed to get America moving forward once more," Clinton wrote.

Peri Jude Radecic, NGLTF acting executive director, said, "This conference took on heightened significance

as the first national gathering of the gay and lesbian community following the presidential elections. We stand as a people at a dramatic turning point."

Next year's Creating Change conference will be held in November in the Washington, D.C. area. For information, contact Ivy Young, NGLTF Creating Change Coordinator, 1734 14th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202)332-6483.

Hundreds gather to launch banned prayer book

By Mayne Ellis

Special to Second Stone

Daring to Speak Love's Name, a gay/lesbian prayer book compiled by Dr. Elizabeth Stuart, and banned by the Anglican Church's publishing house, was the focus of a remarkable launch on October 27. Over 300 people filled Westminster Auditorium, London, for an evening of worship and protest.

John S. Spong, Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, delivered the keynote address. "To preserve unity," he observed, "the church plays to fear and prejudice." "God works in such strange ways to draw this broken world into the wholeness for which it was created. The Christian Church so frequently raises its institutional voice to offer support to the forces of oppression and prejudice. When that happens the wide disparity between

the Gospel of God's love and the way the church actually lives out that Gospel, when its institutional vested interests are threatened, becomes obvious."

Spong noted that Archbishop George Carey, in his address to the American House of Bishops, criticised "one issue Christians," citing feminism, biblical fundamentalism and homosexuality as "tangential issues." Spong noted his surprise that any thinking Christian could consider the status of women, the abuse of scripture, and human sexuality to be marginal issues. They are interlocked, he said, defining basic struggles in the Christian church, and he resoundingly affirmed his ongoing support on these issues. To a standing ovation, he called the church to open its heart and mind to gay and

lesbian people.

The gathering featured readings and scripture from *Daring to Speak Love's Name*, a blessing of relationships performed by the Rev. Jean Elder and Fr. Bernard Lynch, and music performed by the MCC Women's Choir and the London Gay Men's Choir.

Dr. Elizabeth Stuart, lecturer at St. Mark's and St. John's Theological College and editor of

Daring to Speak Love's Name, took the podium to massive applause and told of the dramatic events surrounding the book's publication. Initially, she had been commissioned by the Society to Promote Christian Knowledge to produce *Daring to Speak Love's Name*. Early last year, someone on the editorial board alerted the Archbishop of Canterbury, President

SEE LAUNCH, Page 20

Little Rock congregation sets progressive pace for Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK - Pulaski Heights Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) has become the first Arkansas congregation in the mainline tradition to name itself "Open and Affirming" of all persons, including lesbian, gay, and bisexual Christians. Responding to the defeat a year ago of Michael Kinnamon in his bid for the top post of the 1.1 million member denomination, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), due primarily to his support of lesbian and gay persons in the church, the congregation felt compelled to make explicit its position. The Little Rock congregation has formally joined with thirteen other Disciples of Christ congregations and campus ministries to join the Open and Affirming Ministries Program coordinated by the Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Alliance (GLAD).

Writing in the church's newsletter the week following the vote, Pastor Arnold Nelson reflected that the congregation, in seeking to remain inclusive, had become a meeting place for a rich diversity of people. "We've made quite an amazing patchwork quilt of saints and sinners," wrote Nelson, "and I love us for

it." The congregation proudly touts the maxim, "This church has no doctrine but Christ, preaches no gospel but love, and has no purpose but to serve."

The official statement reads, in part: "We welcome all who profess Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, Son of the Living God. We affirm the value and dignity of all without reference to other tests of fellowship or any life condition. We celebrate Christ's call to all his disciples and in his name we embrace each other as brothers and sisters."

The Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance was formed in 1979 to maintain a visible presence in outreach to gay, lesbian, bisexual, and affirming members and congregations of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The organization established the Open and Affirming Ministries program after the Findlay Street Christian Church in Seattle, Washington announced its inclusive vision in 1987. The Christian Church, the largest North American-born mainline tradition, has over 4,000 congregations throughout the U.S. and Canada.

LGCM to investigate "ex-gay" movement

LONDON - The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement has appointed a commission to investigate Christian-inspired attempts to "heal" or "convert" Gays and Lesbians to heterosexuality. The ex-gay programs in England are being described as a "new, alarming trend."

Taking note of the obvious need to examine and evaluate the claims and methods of ex-gay organizations LGCM's team has been asked to consult extensively with all interested parties and publish their findings. LGCM has appointed Tony Green as secretary of the commission.

Commenting on the launching of the commission, LGCM's General Secretary Rev. Richard

Kirker said, "We take the view that to coerce anyone to abstain from a sexual relationship, solely because of sexual orientation, leads to a profoundly distorted and incomplete life. Rather than offering true healing to the sexually confused or vulnerable the ex-gay movement simply creates an illusion of false hope. People who are misled in this way are denied the chance of finding sexual wholeness and God's unconditional love. We must warn of these dangers."

The controversy has been gaining momentum as a result of several newspaper articles and a television documentary appearing within the last year.

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UFMCC rebuffed by National Council of Churches

ANGRY LESBIAN AND GAY Christians demonstrated on the floor of the National Council of Churches meeting in Cleveland on November 12 after NCC's General Board rejected by a vote of 90 to 81 the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches' application for observer status.

"It's easier to get into heaven than into the NCC," said the Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson of Los Angeles, Ecumenical Officer for the UFMCC, who was invited to the dias to speak after the vote.

"We have come to this point after 11 years of relationship with you," she continued. "And now we have had to endure this experience of hearing you have a conversation about us, but not with us."

The vote touched off an emotional demonstration by UFMCC members, as well as by members of gay and lesbian caucuses from denominations that already belong to the council and from other non-member denominations. Leaders from these groups were meeting in Cleveland in conjunction with the NCC meeting.

The vote came nine months after Orthodox churches resumed ties with the NCC after a 10-month split to protest liberal positions of the council and member denominations on homosexuality and other issues.

After the meeting, Elder Wilson rejected the NCC Membership Committee's recommendation that talks continue between the council and UFMCC, saying there would be no point to such talks after the church had been so severely rebuffed.

The predominantly lesbian and gay UFMCC had applied for observer

status in May, 1992, following the termination of an 11-year process of investigation and dialogue which followed UFMCC's application for NCC membership in 1981.

Observer status, which confers only the opportunity to attend meetings and speak with the chair's permission, had previously been given to Muslim and Jewish groups and to the Unitarian Universalist denomination, which ordains openly gay and lesbian persons and blesses same-sex unions. NCC spokesman J. Martin Bailey said the primary opponents to granting observer status to the UFMCC were the Eastern Orthodox churches, some of the historically African-American denominations and the Korean Presbyterian Church in the United States. "There were 12 [of a total of 32] denominations which, according to an informal poll in the corridors, said that if observer status was granted they would be forced to leave the council," he said.

At the same meeting the NCC voted to seek better ties with Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and evangelical churches, groups which strongly oppose equality for Lesbians and Gays. To build ties with them, the General Board extended its ecumenical committee's work through 1995 and added five employees for relations with those groups. "We will be making much closer contact with them and inviting them to our meetings so we would have much closer relationships with them and a fuller understanding of each other," said NCC president, the Rev. Syngman Rhee.



Lesbian and gay Christian leaders protest at the NCC General Board meeting after the vote on the UFMCC observer status on Nov. 12, 1992. Rev. Nancy Wilson, Ecumenical Officer for the UFMCC, is second from right.

Photo: Kittredge Cherry, UFMCC

Lesbian/gay religious leaders meet during NCC gathering

REPRESENTATIVES OF MOST of the nation's gay and lesbian Christian caucuses and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches met in Cleveland November 10-13 in conjunction with the meeting of the General Board of the National Council of Churches. More than 25 representatives from 13 organizations attended. The group, which last met in 1989, shared concerns among the various groups struggling for equal rights within their respective denominations. The gay and lesbian leaders also wanted to be present at the NCC meeting to support the UFMCC's request for observer status and to remind delegates of

the presence of gay and lesbian members in their own denominations.

The meeting on Tuesday, November 10 was held at the national headquarters of the United Church of Christ in downtown Cleveland.

In other action, the gay and lesbian leaders made plans to meet again in November, 1993 and also sponsor a joint presence at the March on Washington in April, 1993. They expressed outrage at Rev. Jane Spahr's rejection as pastor of the Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester, New York, and called for action against the state of Colorado.

Free ticket to DC for three longest term couples Love and fidelity to be celebrated at March

AMERICA'S LONGEST TERM lesbian, gay and bisexual couples will be honored at The Wedding, a massive ceremony of commitment to be held April 24, as part of The March on Washington. Rev. Troy Perry, founder and moderator of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches has announced that the UFMCC is launching a national search for the lesbian, gay and bisexual couples who have stayed together the longest. The UFMCC will give the three longest-term couples a free round-trip airline ticket to Washington to attend the ceremony.

"I want to celebrate the love and fidelity of these three extraordinary couples and show Middle America and the world that our relationships last as long as those in the heter-

osexual community, even with all the cultural pressures against us," Perry said. "I have already received a letter from a gay male couple who just celebrated their 46th year together. I am sure there are many, many couples out there who have been together for decades. I want to hear from them."

Rev. Perry will conduct the wedding ceremony at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, April 24. He expects the ritual to set a world record as the largest ceremony of its kind ever held, with at least 4,000 gay, lesbian and bisexual couples exchanging vows.

Long-term couples may contact Rev. Perry by writing to The Wedding, UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Ste. 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

Bishops, Queens and Pawns

By Kevin Calegari
Special to Second Stone

Ed. Note: The National Conference of Catholic Bishops met in Washington, DC in mid-November to discuss issues facing the American Catholic Church. In this article, Dignity/USA president Kevin Calegari shares his reflections on the gathering.

I didn't have any illusions. I didn't expect to see centuries of sexism and homophobia overturned. But somehow, I thought that four days with 275 Catholic bishops at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting in mid-November would be fun. What better opportunity to schmooze and buttonhole and put "in their face" the story of lesbian, gay and bisexual people?

Yes, it was fun. There were moments of humor, and there was a bit of a thrill to be in the middle of it all. But after four days of wading through a sea of black suits as it rolled, crested and crashed through the halls and ballrooms of the Omni Shoreham Hotel, I know one thing. I don't want to have to do it again. Now, don't get me wrong. I haven't lost my faith. They say that a trip to Rome can make one lose one's faith. Well, I've been to Rome too many times, and I still believe. In God, yes. In Christ, yes. In God's people and their work for peace and struggles for justice, yes. But I know better than to look to my bishops for clear guidance and moral leadership when it comes to gender and sexual justice. I look to the work and faith of all the women and men of our tradition, of which I am a part. I believe not in a petrified tradition jealously guarded by those in power. I look to a living tradition, handed on by those who struggle with the big questions in their lives, the tradition handed on especially by those not in power. I believe, for all its sexism and homophobia, racism and classism, the Christian tradition can be redemptive. And I believe, somehow, that the tradition can be redeemed. God speaks a word of challenge in the lives of my powerless sisters and brothers. This is where I find hope.

On November 16, the first day of the meeting, over 100 Dignity members and New Ways Ministry supporters gathered outside the Omni Shoreham for a prayer rally. We had with us over 12,400 petitions gathered from across the country, rebutting last summer's dastardly memo from the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. This document instructed bishops to oppose our civil rights, resurrecting old myths and tired stereotypes and, in the process, violating several principles of Catholic theology: so much for a *magisterium* which carefully guards and preserves

the tradition. After weeks of negotiations and heated debate in the bishops' administrative committee, the conference agreed to acknowledge our presence and delegated Bishop James Malone to meet us and receive the petitions.

A small victory. But a significant one, since this is the first time the bishops conference has acknowledged that we exist, let alone sent a bishop to meet with us. It follows on an unprecedented meeting I had last summer at the Vatican, and numerous private meetings with bishops around the country. In fact, Dignity has met with more church officials in the last four months than in the previous six years.

Why all this "dialogue" after so many years of stalemate? The famous Ratzinger letter of 1986, which banned Dignity and made "intrinsic disorder" a household phrase, had a chilling effect on lesbian/gay ministry and theological reflection in official church circles. While discussion was cut off or limited by official guidelines, ministry and reflection continued to flourish in liminal communities such as Dignity. However, the outrageous statements in the recent CDF memo has pushed members of the hierarchy to join in conversation once again. While it was prompted by certain American prelates (our sources indicate that Francis Stafford, Archbishop of Denver, and Cardinal James Hickey, Archbishop of Washington, were involved in its drafting), few bishops or other Catholics, for that matter, agree with the fundamentalist ideology prominent in the memo. The consensus is that Rome has gone too far. Even a Gallup survey commissioned by Dignity and other groups last spring shows that 78 percent of U.S. Catholics support equal rights for lesbian and gay people.

Unfortunately, the bishops did not take up the issue of lesbian/gay rights in floor debate. Their energies were consumed by the pastoral on women's concerns and, in executive session, by the Vatican deficit and by the clergy pedophilia problem. While I received numerous words of encouragement, even praise from individual bishops, no one was willing to stand up to Rome publicly with blunt words of criticism. It is a sorry state of affairs, this conspiracy of fear and silence. Clearly, the bishops are divided on our concerns, powerless to combat the violence and bigotry we face, even when some are so inclined.

If there was too much silence on lesbian and gay issues, there was no dearth of discussion on the proposed women's pastoral. Since sexism and homophobia are linked and inter-

twined, I did not feel as if lesbian/gay concerns were ignored. The debate on "women's concerns" was, by extension, a debate on lesbian/gay concerns as well. After all, how can a church even consider affirming its lesbian, gay and bisexual members if a "natural resemblance" to Christ (understood in the Vatican's 1976 *Inter Insigniores* as possession of a penis) is a prerequisite for priesthood? The nine-year effort was probably doomed to failure from the start. How could a group of men write about women's concerns without looking paternalistic? The fourth draft, after numerous interventions from the Vatican, virtually obliterated the voices of women which had been part of earlier drafts. The eventual 137-110 vote, short of the 190 votes required for approval, showed a rift among bishops never before exposed.

While not a debate on women's ordination *per se*, the issue was clearly on their minds. Courageous progressives appealed for openness to further dialogue, and spoke of women's alienation and anger. Bishop Thomas Costello called the proposed draft "intrinsically and internally inconsistent." Conservatives trembled, fearing that a failure of resolve now would open the floodgates to worse heresies. Bishop Austin Vaughan put a new twist on "anatomy as destiny" by moaning, "a woman can no more be a priest than I can have a baby." Hearing the frank and often opposing statements was refreshing, even a cause for joy: here one could actually observe the painful retirement of one paradigm and the slow emergence of another. The floodgates were opened, and the sea of black suits was leaking out in every direction. Imposed unanimity, the "unity of uniformity" which is antithetical to Catholic tradition, fell apart. One bishop noted, "the genie is out of the bottle." Added a waggish observer, "and it's a girl."

Admittedly, these changes come too slow for many of us. But changes are

afoot in Catholicism, which is good for Catholics and their neighbors alike. At their November meeting, the bishops heard the voices of women loud and clear, whether they liked what they heard or not. The bishops met the gay and lesbian Catholics for the first time. They also met with survivors of clergy pedophilia, thus ending years of denial of a problem stemming from the church's sexual dysfunctionality. The bishops faced not only those seeking justice, they faced their own limitations. Any pastor would call this a valuable lesson in spiritual development.

While the feminist and lesbian/gay movements have been saying for years that "the emperor has no clothes," it was remarkable to see, in the bishops' admission of failure, the emperor himself acknowledging his nakedness and vulnerability. Mary's words come to mind: "God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly" (Luke 1:52). The powerless have confronted the powerful, and the tradition lives on, to be reformed, enriched and redeemed by the lives and voices of those who can no longer be ignored. In the end, the women's pastoral lost. The Body of Christ, and especially its female, lesbian, gay and bisexual members, won an important, if interim, victory.

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World Community Builders completes mission in Dominican Republic

COVER STORY

From Page 1

vision of building community with those in need, wherever the need might be, as opposed to just building structures, according to Rev. Stephen Fund, founder and director of World Community Builders. He is sometimes asked whether it would be better to just send money and let locals do their own construction but, says Fund, the work project can be thought of as an excuse for being with the people. "People often come away from cross-cultural experiences with a new perspective on life, a new understanding of one's self, and a stronger commitment to serve others as Christ would serve," Fund says.

Reclining on the couch at his Atlanta home, which serves as the headquarters for World Community Builders, Rev. Stephen Fund reflects on the ministry he has long dreamed of.

"This is a faith venture for me," he begins to explain. "When I resigned as pastor of All Saints Metropolitan Community Church (in Atlanta), people asked me, 'What are you gonna do?' and I answered, 'I'm going to try to develop the mission program,' and people would say, 'Yeah, but what are you going to do?' They meant how was I going to pay the bills."

So far, it seems God has provided for the needs of World Community Builders as they come off their first ten day work camp. Many temporal needs still exist, like money for more camps, a photocopier and other business office expenses, but all evidence suggests a spiritual need has been met by World Community Builders.

The pavilion built at the El Tamarindo site will serve as a community center and as a meeting place for MCC El Tamarindo. It is the first UFMCC church building in the Dominican Republic. The 18 volunteers represented ten churches, nine cities, and eight states. Eleven were men and seven were women with ages ranging from 30 to 65. Rev. Howard Williams, pastor of MCC Santo Domingo and Francisco Barrera, student cleric and pastor of MCC El Tamarindo, provided local coordination of the project.

Fund gets the same gleam in his eye when he talks about World Community Builders that a proud parent gets when pictures of his kids are passed around. The seed of WCB was planted when Fund was only 17. While attending high school in southern California, he went on his first work camp to Mexico in 1970

with a Church of God organization called Vacation Samaritans. "It just rang my bells," he recalls. The next summer, he went to Panama with the Samaritans and a pattern was established.

"Between those two work camps, I really sensed that I was being called into missionary work," he says. "The program was very significant for me in identifying where I was to head in the future."

But, it would be ten years before WCB came into existence. In that time, Fund became a pilot and worked for Vacation Samaritans until 1977, when he began to realize he was gay. His coming out process was very slow, he says, as he struggled to reconcile his gayness, his Christianity and his calling. By 1984 he had begun his journey into the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches and was called to be a lay leader at their Tacoma, Washington congregation. There he became student clergy, earning his licensure by 1987. That year also marked his first fulltime pastorate at All Saints MCC in Atlanta.

All during that time, his heart and mind never strayed far from missions and outreach.

"I tried very hard to keep my congregation involved in missions," says Fund. "While I pastored in Tacoma, we supported MCC in Nigeria. At All Saints, we sent support to Santo Domingo."

World Community Builders was born at a dinner table in Phoenix, Arizona in 1991. While at the UFMCC General Conference that year, Fund went out to dinner with several old friends.

"The conversation turned to missions, and it was like the table lit up," he remembers, with that gleam in his eyes, "there was a spirit there. We all had a burden for missions and wanted to see MCC do more in the international community."

On that same trip, Fund visited with his old friend, Dr. Darrell Jones, leader of Vacation Samaritans. He ran the idea past Dr. Jones, who was supportive and continues to be a resource for World Community Builders.

Now, Fund looks to the future of WCB, dreaming of four work camps a year. Through the UFMCC World Church Extension, there is no shortage of areas that can use their help. And, with Fund's gift of faith, hopefully there will be no shortage of people to help him build a true world community.

Those attending a work camp are

responsible for their own expenses, including travel and a donation toward building supplies, although church and community service groups sometimes raise funds to sponsor volunteers. Although some of the work is strenuous, support jobs such as food preparation provide a place to contribute for those who are not physically strong. Workers need not be familiar with the local language. A lot of communication can take place without words, says Fund. "Love is a universal language."

Fund explains his philosophy on missions this way. "Abraham and Sarah were blessed to be a blessing. God didn't intend for them to keep the blessing to themselves or to Israel, but that through their descendants, meaning Jesus, the whole world would be blessed. We, in America, are blessed, and we need to spread that blessing."

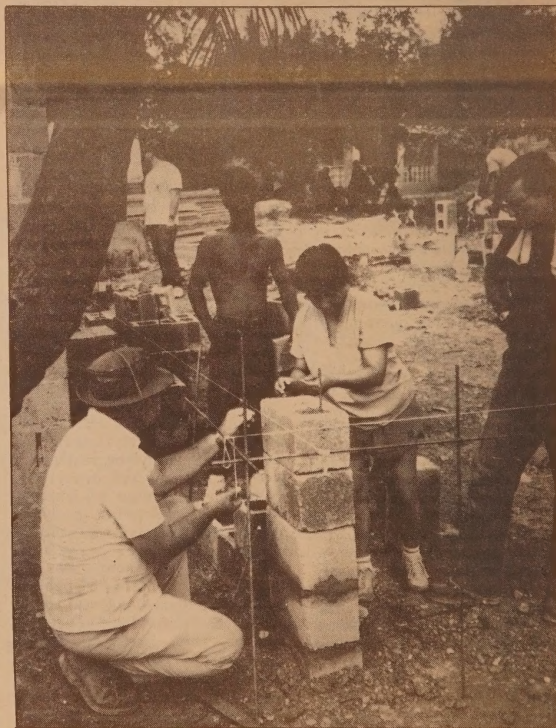
Mary Bologna didn't know she wanted to go to Santo Domingo. The

47 year old medical secretary from Atlanta is a member of All Saints MCC. While at the denomination's District Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee in November of 1991, she says she was praying for God's will in her life.

"I prayed that God would put me where I was supposed to be," she recalls. "When I came home from conference, and went to church there was a presentation on World Church Extension that included a small part about Santo Domingo. It was like a lightbulb went on and I said, 'That's where I'm going.'"

The very next day she got a passport and began searching for more information on how she could get to Santo Domingo. She began writing to Rev. Howard Williams, the minister at the Santo Domingo church, and they kept regular correspondence. A few months later,

SEE WCB, Next Page



Stacking blocks for posts, left to right, Carson Malcomb, Charlie (Dominican worker), Mary Bologna, Dan Leary

Helping the PWA homeless

By The Latest Issue

IN A LARGE SENSE every American with AIDS is homeless. Federal funding and policies governing treatment and research are shamefully inadequate. The sad reality of the 90s is that more and more people with AIDS are becoming homeless not only in the symbolism of a nation's neglect, but in physical terms as well.

The causes of homelessness among people with AIDS are in many ways similar to the causes of homelessness among the general population. "People who cannot work, who have no assets or strong family connections are at risk of becoming homeless," says Dan Delaney, administrator of Loaves and Fishes, a Sacramento, Cal., organization supported by the Catholic Church. The program serves the poor and homeless through a variety of community based programs, including Hope House, a home for people with AIDS.

While the federal Supplemental Security Income program provides individuals approximately \$675 per month, the waiting time

to actually receive the grant can be from six to eight months. This is more than enough time to exhaust the resources of most people and head them into the downward spiral of homelessness.

"The federal housing budget was cut by 75 percent during the Reagan-Bush era," Delaney said. "All the money that we've gone into debt for during the last twelve years went into the military budget and they tried to gut everything else.

"When the economy is good there are a lot of people who just hang on by the edge, but when the economy contracts some people fall off the edge," Delaney said.

A scenario of a person with AIDS sliding toward homelessness was offered by Carlo Parker, a community outreach worker to the Sacramento AIDS Foundation. "Some people get a positive diagnosis and panic," said Parker. "The person may think, I'm going to die anyway, and then may go off on a tangent of alcohol and drug abuse. They lose their self esteem and the wreckage that they create in their life creates

more wreckage - which makes the compulsion to 'use' even stronger - and the wreckage even greater."

The harsh reality of life on the streets also causes difficulty for those with HIV. Like some sad, weird reflection of "normal" society, the homeless HIV sufferer fears discrimination.

"Even among those who have been tested, homeless HIV victims don't admit that they have HIV, because the street culture will discriminate against them," said Parker.

The young constitute still another group of homeless HIV sufferers whose numbers continue to grow. They are the runaways or throwaway kids whose lives often become an incoherent jumble of hustling and drug abuse.

Jerry Love, a health education worker for the Sacramento AIDS Foundation believes that the number of younger homeless people is indeed growing. "Outreach to the young around so called 'public sex environments' is very important," said Love. "They need to know that there is hope and that there are alter-

natives to the lifestyles they are leading."

While the poor economy of the Bush administration and the subsequent unraveling of our social fabric are undoubtedly a root cause of the homelessness among HIV sufferers, Dan Delaney believes that the true problem lies somewhere within the collective American psyche. "There is some part and parcel of the American mentality that leaves the poor and the sick behind," said Delaney. "Most other countries who are generally recognized as civilized don't allow this type of thing to occur."

If what Delaney says is true, if there is some tragic crack, some Achilles heel in the American character which allows us as a society to throw the dying on the street, then surely now is the time for us to come together and attempt to correct that deficit.

Dan Delaney, Jerry Love, Carlo Parker and countless others are doing their part to end the plight of homeless HIV sufferers. It's time for the rest of us to find ways to join the fight. -Dave Roelke
Reprinted with permission from The Latest Issue.

WCB,
From Previous Page

Stephen Fund, then minister at All Saints, announced the first WCB work camp would be in Santo Domingo.

"I was the first to sign up," says Bologna.

When the plane landed in Santo Domingo in November of 1992, her year of waiting was over. "It was like going home to a family," she says smiling. "There were no barriers, even though we didn't speak the same language. We just communicated."

There was a bit of a culture shock. Most Dominicans live in abject poverty. Their homes are small shanties with no doors or windows, and only occasional electricity. There is no running water or air conditioning. But, what struck Bologna was the spirit of the people.

"I've never seen so much laughing and singing," she exclaims. Each night, after working hard all day to build the church in El Tamarindo, they would sit under the stars and sing. "Now, when I leave work at 7 p.m., I think, 'They are singing now,'" she smiles. "These people are so happy and they don't even know they are poor. They are so peaceful."

The culture also identifies homo-

sexuals in a different way. Those men considered exclusively gay are those who cross-dress or act effeminate.

"Most of them don't fit these categories," explains Fund. "Most of them are or have been married and have children. They are not considered gay although they may be involved with other men and prefer that."

Fund estimates that 95% of the men in the Santo Domingo church are what we would call gay. Most of the women attending are wives, mothers and sisters of the men and as in many cultures, what the women do sexually is largely ignored, so it's hard to say how many Lesbians are in the congregation.

But, cultural definitions didn't seem to make much difference in how people treated one another, or their American guests. Bologna says the hard work of building a pavilion at El Tamarindo brought everyone together.

"Men, women, and children were all helping. We dug ditches, we hauled cinder blocks and more," she remembers. "I've never done construction work before. The dirtiest my hands ever get is when I report a plant. But I worked hard, we all did. I've never seen such a dedicated

bunch of people, both Americans and Dominicans."

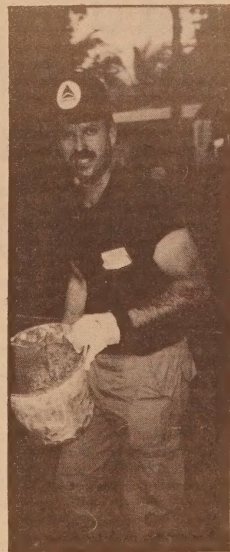
The sweat, laughter and love produced an open air pavilion and the village's only flushing toilet and running water sinks. The building doesn't look like an American idea of a church, but it's just what the community needs.

"They don't need walls and glass in their humid climate," explains Fund. "They need a place for the breeze to come through and a roof to keep the sun off their heads."

It also produced a long lasting friendship between those who went and the Dominicans. Bologna says she will keep in touch with her new family, writing to them, and trying to learn Spanish in time for the next trip.

World Community Builders plans to return to Santo Domingo in March to help fix up the San Salvador Orphanage and build a lean-to at the El Tamarindo site. Bologna says she will be there.

"The bonding that we did was unbelievable," she gushes, trying to recapture the feeling in words. "I never anticipated that. I was afraid of talking to people because I didn't speak the language, but you didn't have to. What comes from a heart, goes to a heart."



WCB director Rev. Steve Fund carries cement to worksite

Building gay and lesbian families

By Rev. Sylvia Pennington
Contributing Writer

Ed. Note: The late Rev. Sylvia Pennington filed this article with Second Stone in November, 1990.

Considerable progress has been made over the past two decades allowing gay and lesbian people to parent, have nests and live more of the kind of family life they grew up in.

It's commonly known that many gay people sort of merge into their own families with one another. Some parents cannot accept a homosexual child. Others are able to accept their homosexual child, but not the child's mate. I know of a gay male couple who in their 25 year relationship have never spent a Christmas - or any holiday or major family event - together. Members of the younger generation usually will not put up with this. If they cannot attend family functions as a couple, they just don't go at all.

Does this mean that they do not have a family in the larger sense? Not really. Many people in this situa-

tion seem to be able to find other couples facing the same problem and together become extended family. And while many couples are content in their relationship with each other and extended family, others seek to include children, either their own or adoptive, in their family unit. Today, many lesbian mothers and some gay fathers are given custody of their children, with the other parent having visitation rights.

A while back, a 16 year old boy hung himself in the basement of his mother's home in a small town in Missouri. The boy's father, a gay man, married at 18 years of age in an attempt to "do the right thing" and, perhaps, to get "straightened out." At 19 he became a father and at 21 he realized he could no longer keep up the pretense of being heterosexual. During the divorce hearing, his homosexuality became a major issue. The judge granted very minimal visitation rights and the visits had to be chaperoned. The child had heard about "faggots" and "queers" and how they couldn't be trusted to be alone with even their own child. Despite this the boy loved his father and

enjoyed his visits with daddy. But the child's early years of hearing so much negativity of what gay people were like traumatized him when, in his early teens, he began to realize that he, too, was gay. Unable to deal with the persecution he knew his father had lived with, he opted to take his own life.

every sense a family and the children usually learn at a fairly young age that they simply have two mommies and two daddies. If it's a well bonded unit, the children will be able to pass through the peer pressure of adolescence and know they have a healthy, normal, good home.

I know of one family in Colorado

The need and desire to be a parent is being realized in a number of ways by gay and lesbian people.

Thank God that what this child experienced through years of brainwashing has become much less the norm. More often than not if a gay parent does not have custody of the children, they're at least given liberal visitation rights and custody privileges during summer months and major holidays. In most cases now the gay parent remains active in the child's life and so the child is free to learn and understand both sides of the picture.

The need and desire to be a parent is being realized in a number of ways by gay and lesbian people. As single people are often given adoption rights today, many children are adopted by what appears to be a single parent but, in actuality, the single parent is part of a gay or lesbian couple.

Also, it is not uncommon for a lesbian couple to have one partner artificially inseminated by the other partner's brother so that the blood lines are mixed. Other lesbian couples, primarily in major cities, will find doctors who are willing to artificially inseminate them as an openly gay couple.

I know a great many men today who have been used to artificially inseminate a lesbian woman with the understanding that, though the mother will have the primary physical custody of the offspring, the child will know who their father is and spend considerable time with him.

I am aware of other couples where both the daddies and the mommies share one large home. They are in

where a gay man and lesbian married in order to have a child. During the first two years of the child's life, daddy was the primary child care parent. The couple divorced after a few years and each parent entered into a gay relationship. The child had two homes. When I met him at six years of age, he was a bright, spunky little guy who didn't appear in the least confused over the family arrangement. After school he went home to his daddies where he played, did homework and had dinner. After dinner, he was taken home to his mommies where he was bathed, read to, and tucked into bed. After breakfast, mommy took him to school.

The child was fortunate that both sets of parents were nurturing, loving, Christian people. Today, at almost 15 years of age, both his teacher and the school counselor consider him to be a very happy, normal youngster. At the present time, he lives primarily with his dads who are now in the 12th year of their relationship. His mother's relationship didn't last and, since she's back in school and also working, it's more convenient for him to stay with his dads, but he still sees his mother a lot.

I'm not sure how it comes about, but I know of many gay and lesbian couples today who get babies shortly after the baby's birth. Most of these babies are of mixed racial background and from single parents who have chosen to give their babies up to what they consider to be a healthy environment for the child.

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It's 10 am on a weekday morning. Curtis builds a fire in a garbage barrel for the morning coffee. People come out of their homes, squinting at the morning light. They close doors behind them, doors that latch perfectly. They spill into wide streets filled with dirt and gravel. Chelsea, the dog, roots around for scraps. Somewhere a pair of cats searches out breakfast.

This is morning in Hutsville, a "homeless" community in Atlanta, in the shadow of the Georgia Dome. And this is the gay neighborhood of Hutsville, up on a slight hill centered between two "straight" neighborhoods.

Today is a little different from most mornings - a city of Atlanta sanitation crew is bulldozing Hutsville's woodpile about 20 yards away. Curtis is animated.

"They come to take all the wood," he says. "All the wood. You tell me. How we supposed to cook with no wood? How we gonna cook?"

"They say it looks like trash to them," he continues. "But it's our wood. How we gonna cook?"

Other residents are nodding and talking in agreement, but no one has any ideas of what to do. With the bulldozers droning in the background, life in Hutsville goes on.

"We're a community just like anybody else's community," says Dale Mines, a four year resident. "It's just that when you moved into yours the homes were already built and you had to go into your pocket and pay to stay there."

"Us," he continued, "when we got here, there was nothing and we had to go into our muscles and build."

And build they did. Out of scraps from the dumps of the Dome construction and whatever else is available, they have built about 20 huts that house over 70 people.

"There's always 72 people," says Mines. "All the time you have some go to jail and at the same time some get out, but basically it's 72 people."

Like the individuals who live there, each hut has its own personality. Residents take pride in their huts, keeping them neat and organized.

On the door of B. J. Byer's hut is an "Andrew Young for Mayor" sticker. Inside is a table, a camp stove, a full size bed with a patchwork quilt. And burglar bars on the windows.

"I've lived here going on 3 years," he says. "This is my home, but I spend weekends with friends. I live here with a friend of mine, and when we have to go, we'll move together."

According to those who live here, the gay community is strong.

"It's the gay individuals in this community who hold all the strength," says Mines. "They're not afraid to stand up. The heterosexuals

just kind of hang their heads."

Mines, who is known as the Mayor of Hutsville, shares his home with a partner.

"I didn't run for Mayor," he laughs. "I was just elected."

Life in Hutsville is not easy. Residents collect cans to sell for



Photo: Skye Mason

The gay homeless

Memories of Hutsville

money. They rummage garbage cans for food. Winter time is cold, meaning more fires for warmth, and often burned huts.

Mines' hut, with a stone fireplace and a fence made of pallets surrounding a patio, burned a year ago.

He tells the story like this: "Right here, as we sit, this is my patio porch now. This used to be another hut and my house was where you see it. His hut caught on fire. And by the wind being that strong that night, it ignited mine. It was quite innocent, actually. He went to sleep, he was a little tipsy. The wood fell out of his barrel which was inside his hut. It burnt his and mine went with it. So it's really nobody's fault."

While Mines regards his misfortune as "nobody's fault," fires like the one that took his hut are common.

"They get drunk and pull garbage barrels with fires in them into their huts and fall asleep," said Mark Usserie, a friend of Hutsville's residents. Usserie visits the community several times a week, bringing them food and clothing.

"These people are driven by crack," he said. "But they're not seedy. They are young intelligent men with high school educations. They don't see beyond today and satisfying their crack addiction."

"Church groups bring food and clothing to them and they turn around and sell them for crack. A few have jobs but most just live, collecting enough cans for crack or beer."

The residents themselves deny any serious addiction problems.

"Some of them have an alcohol problem, some of them have a drug problem," says Mines. "And some of them are just misfits. Do you know you find the most brilliantist people in trouble?"

The residents of Hutsville are, on the most part, unskilled, unprepared for the job market and in need of substance abuse treatment. The population represents the hardest people to place in housing.

"I'd go for transitional housing," said a friend of B. J. Byers.

"That's you," Byers replied. "I want to have my own apartment by myself."

"A shelter won't do," said Mines. "You're under somebody else's roof, there's no privacy."

"You'd have to see what it's like in a shelter to understand this," said Sherry Sidair, housing coordinator for AID Atlanta, which offers support services to HIV+ residents. The quality of life at Hutsville is much better than in the shelters. They have a home base, something that's intrinsic to being a human being."

"Which would you choose," she added, "sleeping on a cot with 200 other people in a big room or living

SEE HUTSVILLE, Page 19

Out of the Bishop's Closet

By Johnny Townsend
Contributing Writer

Another religious person realizes the error of his ways and comes out. Ho hum.

Out of the Bishop's Closet, from Alamo Square Press, is not, however, a ho hum book. Antonio Feliz was not only a Mormon bishop, which alone makes his experience more interesting, but he also worked in the Church Office Building in Salt Lake City, interacting daily with the highest officials at the Latter-day Saint Church headquarters. We thus read of personal encounters with the Prophet and Twelve Apostles, plus we see the research Feliz has dug up in the closed off Church Archives, material which suggests rather strongly that Joseph Smith, the Church's first prophet, fully accepted homosexuality as being in accordance with God's will.

This is what really makes the book, originally published in 1988 and now updated, truly intriguing. Certainly, it is always useful to read of another account of a religiously devoted person who comes to accept his or her homosexuality, and this is the first book-length account from a Mormon perspective. Naturally then, any gay or lesbian Mormon should find this account by a former missionary and then husband and father of four children helpful.

But the book actually is insightful for a more generalized audience as well, as it illustrates the workings of church politics, how even "men of God," whom Feliz believes to the end truly are men of God, are still human, very human, something certainly not unique to the Mormon Church. Sneaky financial dealings, and the manner in which doctrine or scripture is "approved" or altered throughout church history throws further light on a church which, like many others, considers itself perfect and the "only true church on the face

of the earth."

Feliz's experiences as a temple worker who has the power to marry heterosexual couples "for time and all eternity" also put him on a higher level for Mormons, and his dilemma as a bishop who must hold court and excommunicate gay members (one of whom then commits suicide) is also enlightening in how not only internalized homophobia but also the idea of obedience to authority at all costs works.

In fact, this leads to a discussion of the famous Milgram experiment, in which subjects were told to inflict electric shocks upon other people and who continued to inflict those shocks despite the agonizing cries of the

himself out of school, with the reality that less than half his credits will transfer elsewhere.

This theme of "security" runs throughout the book, as Feliz himself is asked by the Apostles to spy on several church members in Salt Lake (for their opposing doctrines other than the church position on homosexuality). Feliz must follow these members, befriend them, and write down names and license plate numbers, and then report back.

The most interesting material, however, has to be that about the early church reaction to gay members. When a missionary, Lorenzo D. Barnes, dies in England and is buried

Joseph still appoints Bennett as the first mayor of the Mormon town of Nauvoo. Joseph's brother later complains about Bennett's sexual activities with cadets in the Nauvoo Legion, and Joseph refuses to take any action against Bennett. He even makes Bennett the assistant president of the church.

All of this, obviously, is repressed by the church today, and Feliz calls out for historians to do further research. The bits we get here are certainly tantalizing, and we can only hope someone takes up his challenge, since Feliz, now excommunicated, has no further access to the archives.

There are, despite the jewels in the book, still a few rhinestones. Grammatically, Feliz has an infuriating habit of putting a comma after the word "but" or "and" rather than before it, creating odd pauses in flow. More problematic is his assertion that he not only receives inspiration from God but actual revelation, and he recounts a couple of these for us. He is still convinced that he holds the actual priesthood authority of God, and he talks of healings he's taken part in. For anyone expecting his leaving the church to mean he's really made a break with it, or with religion in general, the book would be disappointing. But for those who want to see spirituality in action even outside of organized religion, or who want to see insights on church hierarchy or into history, the book offers much on which to reflect.

When they were both seniors at the LDS Brigham Young University, one of them, tracked down at a gay meeting by campus security under direction of the university Standards Office, is coerced to name everyone else he knows at the school who is gay.

"victims." Feliz compares this both with church hierarchy ("The Prophet will never lead you astray." "If you obey the Priesthood leaders even when they're wrong, God will bless you.") and with society in general.

Other "shocking" stories include that of two gay lovers together for several years, one of whom must finally confess a terrible sin to the other. When they were both seniors at the LDS Brigham Young University, one of them, tracked down at a gay meeting by campus security under direction of the university Standards Office, is coerced to name everyone else he knows at the school who is gay. He has only one class left to take before graduation and is threatened with expulsion. He gives the name of his future lover, who, with only one semester left, now finds

in Illinois on April 16, 1843, Joseph Smith comforts Lorenzo's "friend," reflecting that they shared something special, that "Two who were very [sic] friends indeed should lie down upon the same bed at night locked in each other's embrace talking of their love & should awake in the morning together that they could immediately renew their conversation of love even while rising from their bed..."

Feliz then points out how Wilford Woodruff, who recorded the above statement, two years later, after Smith's death, and after an official effort to rewrite church history, revised the statement to include a female. Woodruff was the prophet 50 years later to rescind the long standing practice of sealing (marrying) men to men in the temple (now never mentioned as having ever taken place), despite the assertion of Brigham Young (Joseph Smith's successor) that "Men will be sealed to men in the Priesthood."

The discussion is too involved to convey completely here, but Feliz shows that in other sources, the "vary friend" is referred to as a "sealed Lover" and by Joseph Smith himself as the "Lover" of Barnes, while in the same discussion, Smith talked of the wives and husbands of other people.

One last bit of history is that of Joseph Smith's interaction with the new convert John C. Bennett. Joseph's brother tells Joseph that Bennett has been driven out of over twenty towns for "buggery," and yet

Book denounces biases of writers of the Bible

The chauvinistic-patriarchal mind set of the writers of the Bible is responsible for the institutionalization of male dominance over women, the discrimination and fears of people affected by AIDS, the discrimination against blacks and other minorities, and the discrimination, religious persecution and disrespect for the human dignity of Gays and Lesbians, says the author of *The Love Forum*, Rev. Dr. Emilio E. Marquez, Pastor and

Dean of the Independent Church of Religious Science, Long Beach, Cal. One of the main purposes of the book is to neutralize the patriarchal lies of the past, according to Marquez, and to make Lesbians and Gays feel welcome at the church again. He hopes that readers are inspired to respect the Bible for its spiritual treasures, and not be intimidated by the historical biases of Bible writers of the 10th Century B.C.

In Print, briefly...

Book for straights who don't get it

The Straight Person's Guide to Gay People's Anguish by Dignity/Long Beach leader Jack Castiglione was written to help readers understand the physically and psychologically damaging effects of rejection. This is "the book to give to the relative or friend who 'just can't seem to get it,'" according to the author. Castiglione carries on a patient, caring conversation-style monologue with the reader which then leads into highly charged, gripping chapters which describe the disturbing struggles which Gays and Lesbians face.
- \$15.00 at bookstores or from the author, P.O. Box 7945, Long Beach, CA 90807.

Gay books catalog

Paths Untrodden, a gay owned mail order book service for literature concerning male homosexuality, gay liberation and men's issues has released its annual catalog, listing hundreds of titles. The company specializes in hard to find small press, imported and out of print books.
- Catalog from Paths Untrodden, P.O. Box 3245 Grand Central Stn., New York, NY 10163, \$3.00.

Sensuous Spirituality: Out from Fundamentalism

By Andrea L. T. Peterson
Contributing Writer

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Crossroad Publishing Co.; 1992; PB; 204 pp. (including appendices and notes)

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, who has been trying to shed light on women's, Gay's, and Lesbian's reality since the late 70s, seems to have upped the wattage with her newest book, *Sensuous Spirituality*. Her struggle is to get "out from fundamentalism," under which she was raised - to answer the question "How does a fundamentalist who believes she is essentially and totally depraved become transformed into a person who knows she is an innocent spiritual being who is temporarily having human experiences?"

Mollenkott, who aligns her theology/ideology most closely with liberation theology, echoes the core of that theology: "spiritual beings who are having human experiences... demonstrate love for their ultimate and eternal context by enacting tender concern for penultimate and the apparently temporary." In other words, a genuine concern not for self, but for all others (people as well as all other living creatures) and for the planet and its resources is an automatic, almost involuntary by-product of those truly at one with God.

To support this thesis, Mollenkott considers and incorporates a number of simple premises. Among them, these three. First, God is "neither male nor female nor neuter, and yet all-inclusively male and female and neuter." Second, "everyone else at their core is exactly who I am: undivided from God Himself, ultimately

secure in a love that can never be broken." And third, "we must not measure God's nature by our own."

Her initial discussion of the language which we use to name/describe God is eye-opening as well as entertaining. It would not do her justice to try to thoroughly outline that discussion here. Suffice it to say that since Goddess, Her, She, female, and woman all incorporate the words which refer to males, it makes at least as much sense to use the "more inclusive" words. In addition, since male terms have been considered both normative and inclusive for at least 2000 years, why not give the other set of terms a millennium or two? Mollenkott is not unaware of her humor - nor is she unaware of the true validity of the arguments, in spite of the humorous approach.

Hers is, in fact, one of the best - and most convincing - arguments for inclusivity around. Readers may judge for themselves.

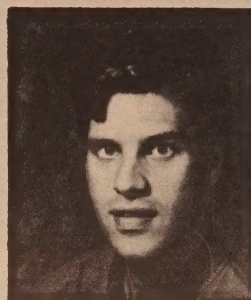
Sensuous Spirituality is not, however, a treatise on inclusive language. While this discussion of language is important, the thrust of the book lies in concept of inclusivity implied by the notion of justice. Mollenkott manages to transform the golden rule from "do unto others as you would have others do unto you" into do unto any other as you would have others do unto you if you and

Ousted cadet: New military policy won't change much

"After President Clinton rescinds the military ban on gay personnel, the big news will be how quickly everything returns to normal," predicts a former ROTC cadet. Jim Holobaugh was thrown out of ROTC and told to repay his \$25,000 scholarship after he came out. He tells about his experiences in *Torn Allegiances: The Story of a Gay Cadet* (Alyson Publications, 1993.)

"There will not be a mass coming-out of Lesbians and gay men in the service," says Holobaugh. "For the most part, those who feel they'd be accepted by their peers are already out, on some level. Those who feel they'd be harassed if they came out will remain invisible, even after the policy changes."

Holobaugh has spent much of his time working to abolish the policy that led to his discharge. On Dec. 12, the generals saw one more line of writing on the wall when they opened the New York Times and found a full page ad, signed by over



Jim Holobaugh
Photo: Mark Gilbert

100 college and university presidents, urging a change in the policy. The ad was orchestrated by Holobaugh, who, told he could not serve his country, had become a volunteer at the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union.

rules for some futuristic society - using biblical justifications for each rule.

The difficulty arises when each participant is told that there is no way of knowing "whether you yourself will be born into that society as female or male; black, yellow, red, or white; homosexual, bisexual, or

subjects husbands to wives as well as wives to husbands in mutually respectful relationship) becomes a real challenge.

Likewise, determining which better guides, Deut 23:1 (which prohibits emasculated men from entering the temple) and Matt. 19:11-12 (which elevates eunuch who have made themselves such for God's kingdom); 1 Cor. 6:9 (which list all who will be prevented from entering heaven) and Romans 8:38-39 (which affirms that nothing can separate us from the love of God); and Mark 7:27 (which distinguishes between the Greeks and God's chosen, the Hebrews) and Acts 17:26-27 (which claims all nations for God); may seem to be impossible.

And impossible it will be, unless each of those planners chooses to assume that he or she will be born into the worst set of circumstances (by 1990 standards) and selects those scriptural passages that will enable him or her - as well as all others born into the same or "better" circumstances - to live the best possible... in the most just world possible. It would behoove each reader to put him or herself to the test (p. 56), although it is likely that readers of Mollenkott have already considered such things as they approach life in the world around them.

There is really so much that can be said about *Sensuous Spirituality*. In sum, it is an invaluable resource to any serious student of the world that will - regardless of the roles individuals choose to or choose not to take - birth the 21st century!

Suffice it to say that since Goddess, Her, She, female, and woman all incorporate the words which refer to males, it makes at least as much sense to use the "more inclusive" words.

he (or she) were to find yourselves, by whatever quirk of fate, living each other's lives.

One of the most effective tools Mollenkott presents for simulating the establishment of a truly just society, built upon this annotated golden rule, in which diversity is not only tolerated or accepted, but respected, is a little exercise of the imagination. Each participant is asked to imagine that she or he is charged with formulating the moral and ethical

heterosexual; able-bodied or physically handicapped; mentally capable or incapable; poor or wealthy; nor do you know whether your nation will be powerful or weak."

Choosing between such passages as 1 Tim. 6:1 (which urges slaves to honor their masters) and Deut. 23:15-16 (which admonishes against returning or oppressing runaway slaves); Gen. 3:16 (which subjects women to the domination of their husbands) and Eph. 5:21 (which

In Print, briefly...

Resource for gay and lesbian Mormons

No More Strangers and Foreigners is a helpful resource for gay and lesbian Mormons, their friends and family members and also for those who counsel such. The 24-page brochure was written by Robert A. Rees, who served as bishop for five years of a Mormon congregation for singles in Los Angeles. Bishop Rees developed an insight and understanding of gay and lesbian people which is representative of the growing awareness among members and leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Single copies are available for \$3.00 each, including first class postage. Bulk discounts also available.

From Grand Teton Graphics, P.O. Box 1826-A, Idaho Falls, ID 83403-1826.

Put on some coffee Can We Talk?

Get ready to meet the gay and lesbian Christians in your community.

Announcing Second Stone's Community Forum

Is there a place in your community to go to meet interesting and caring people like yourself... to engage in stimulating conversation and share interests and concerns? No? Well, YOU can change that! Make life more fun and more interesting. Empower yourself with new ideas. Meet wonderful new people. Listen. Learn. Laugh. With the rise in popularity of *Utne Reader's* Neighborhood Salons, *Second Stone* thinks it's time for gay and lesbian Christians to have their own version of saloning. We're calling it *Second Stone's* Community Forum. One person (YOU!) can make a difference in your community. With a little effort, you can connect a small group of thoughtful Christians in your area for discussion and community.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY FORUM?

A community forum is a small group of individuals who meet on a regular basis for good conversation and fellowship. Although the focus is on discussion and debate, some such groups develop into book and video exchanges, travel groups, and other kinds of sharing experiences.

...AND WHAT IS IT NOT?

The forum is not a church or worship group. The focus is on discussion, in an ecumenical fashion, of issues of importance to gay and lesbian Christians. Participants from all faith backgrounds should be welcomed and included. The forum is not a support group to help deal with personal issues.

WHAT DO YOU TALK ABOUT?

Discussion topics may include hot issues in the news such as abortion and the environment, issues peculiar to your community, and, in particular, national and local issues pertaining to gay and lesbian Christians. Articles from *Second Stone* or some other periodical may be discussed. CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN THAT DISCUSSION OF PERSONAL ISSUES NOT TURN THE FORUM INTO A SUPPORT GROUP.

GETTING STARTED

Assembling a handful of people for your forum may be very easy or near impossible depending upon who you know and where you live. If you are a well connected gay or lesbian Christian you need go no further than your address book, call two or three acquaintances, tell them what the forum is all about, set up a time, and ask them to invite a friend. If a scan of your address book produces no candidates, and you live in an area where there is an established gay community, there are a few things you can try. If there is a local gay/lesbian newspaper, you should approach the editor about your idea of putting together a community forum. She/he will probably run a notice for you at little or no cost. A small circular, such as the one illustrated, may be posted at a gay business. If there is a gay and lesbian ministry in your area, the pastor may allow you to post your circular at their meeting place and may make an announcement for you as well.

POSTING A CIRCULAR

Always get permission before posting an announcement on someone's bulletin board. Some folks who see your announcement may not be gay-friendly. If you are worried about prank phone calls, you may want to use a post office box for contact. (This, however, makes contact a bit more difficult and may cause some interested parties to put it off, or even forget altogether.) Do not include an actual meeting date on your circular. Just announce when your forum meets (first and third Wednesdays, etc.) This way your notice will not become dated, needing replacement.

WHEN OPENNESS IS RESTRICTED

Perhaps you live in an area where there is no established gay community, and an idea such as posting a circular is out of the question. REMEMBER: THERE ARE GAY AND LESBIAN CHRISTIANS IN THE SMALLEST OF COMMUNITIES. You will have to seek them out. Contact local pastors and inform them that you are planning a series of meetings to discuss "how the church can respond with compassion and affirmation to homosexuals in the church" and whether or not she/he may know of someone who might be interested in such discussion. Attend local meetings of peace and social justice groups, such as Pax Christi, and announce your forum there. Contact hospital chaplains and health department social workers. Discuss your plan with everyone who might be interested, or know someone who might be interested, in attending the forum. Don't give up.

WHERE DO YOU MEET?

Initial meetings may be held at a coffee house, cafe, community center, or church space. As members of the forum get to know one another, meetings may rotate between members' homes. In meeting in the homes of members, take care that small children are well occupied or being sit with so as not to interrupt the conversation.

You may want to consider a meeting space that relates to the topic to be discussed. If the forum is discussing homelessness, you may want to meet in a shelter for the homeless. If the discussion is on emergency relief for some disaster, you may want to meet at drive headquarters.

SEE FORUM, Next Page

SECOND STONE'S Community FORUM

Gay & Lesbian Christians
(and friends, family and supportive others)

MEET TO SHARE IDEAS,
CONCERNS, DISCUSSION
AND GOOD FELLOWSHIP

Group meets:

For information contact:

Second Stone, the national gay and
lesbian Christian newsmagazine
Box 8340, New Orleans, LA 70182

THIS CIRCULAR CAN BE USED TO POST OR TO HAVE
AVAILABLE AS A HANDOUT TO PROMOTE YOUR
COMMUNITY FORUM. FITS TWO-UP ON 8 1/2 X 11.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU MEET?

Ask for input on meeting frequency from participants. It is probably best to meet twice monthly on a schedule that is easy to remember, such as the first and third Tuesday. Your forum may meet once a month, but cohesiveness may suffer. The more frequent the meetings, the better everyone gets to know each other. Recall from the previous meeting will give the group momentum.

DIVERSITY OF THE GROUP

Every participant in your forum will show up with different needs and expectations. Some will want the group to be oriented toward Bible study, others toward social concerns, still others, political issues. If the common ground cannot support the range of discussion interests, another forum, or two, can be organized along the lines of discussion desired. Forums should not split because of disagreements on issues, however. Such disagreement insures lively discussion from all sides.

SIZE OF THE GROUP

Everyone should have a chance to be heard. If more than ten people attend your forum there may not be time for all to have input. A forum regularly attended by more than ten people should consider splitting into another group.

Tell us about the talk of your town.

Second Stone wants to know about your Community Forum.
We'll list your meeting in a future issue.

CITY _____

MEETING SCHEDULE _____

CONTACT _____

What is your vision for the Community Forum?

Tell us about your recent discussions.

Send Second Stone a photo of your group.

Would any member of your forum like to be added to our mailing list? Include names and addresses.

Mail to Box 8340, New Orleans, LA 70182 or FAX to (504)891-7555

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Intimacy with God

JANUARY 7-10, 1993, This retreat for gay men will explore how gay love and gay spirituality contribute to cultivating the experience of God's love. The retreat process will include presentations, dialogue, small group work, prayer, play, and worship. Facilitator is John McNeill, Catholic priest, psychotherapist, co-founder of Dignity, and author of *The Church and the Homosexual* and *Taking a Chance on God*. Fee is \$275.00. Kirkridge, a mountain retreat center in Eastern Pennsylvania, is the setting. For information contact Kirkridge, Bangor, PA 18013-9359, (215)588-1793.

Annual T-E-N Weekend

FEBRUARY 26-28, The Evangelical Network has selected "Keeping the Church Alive" as the theme for its

annual gathering in Phoenix. The congregation of Casa de Cristo Evangelical Church is the host. The Evangelical Network is an alternative fellowship of biblical churches, ministries and individual Christians. Workshops will include: Discipleship/Equipping, Pruning, Prayer, Communication, Leadership, Commitment/Dedication, and Accountability. Support groups will include Pastor's Spouses, Pastors, AIDS Ministries, Christian 12-step and Ex-gay Recovery. For information contact T-E-N, P.O. Box 16104, Phoenix, AZ 85011, (602)265-2918.

Sixth National Black Gay and Lesbian Conference

FEBRUARY 11-15, 1993, The Hilton Hotel in Long Beach, Cal., is the setting for "Black Lesbians and Gays: Building Bridges, Making Connections," a conference to focus on the inherent need to bridge the gaps that separate around issues of gender,

race, and sexual orientation. Topics to be discussed during the five day conference include leadership, culture/arts, family/youth, heterosexism, health, public policy, economics, women's/men's issues and spirituality. For information write to the Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum, 2538 Hyperion Ave., #7, Los Angeles, CA 90027, (213)666-5495.

CMI Conference '93

MARCH 4-7, 1993, Communication Ministry, Inc., presents a conference on "The Goodness of Being Gay: Spirituality for Lesbian and Gay Religious, Clergy and Seminarians." Besides major addresses and celebratory liturgies, workshops will include: Celibacy as a Way of Loving, Relationships in the Committed Life, Coming Out, Formation Issues, Aging/Middle Years, and HIV Positive. Conference fee is \$75.00. For further information and pre-registration, write to: CMI Conference '93, P.O. Box 60125, Chicago, IL 60660-0125.

PLGC Midwestern Regional Conference

MARCH 5-7, This conference, sponsored by Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, to be held at the Heartland Presbyterian Center, Kansas City, Missouri, will give participants an opportunity to rediscover the roots of their faith and celebrate their spiritual strength as individuals and as a community. For information contact Doug Atkins, 747 N. Taylor Ave., Kirkwood, MO 63122.

Connecting families

MARCH 12-14, 1993, Laurelville Mennonite Church Center is the setting for the fourth Connecting families retreat sponsored and planned by Church of the Brethren and Mennonite families with gay or lesbian members. For information write to Brethren/Mennonite Parents, P.O. Box 1708, Lima, OH 45802 or Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Route 5, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666.

Women-Church Convergence Conference

APRIL 16-18, Albuquerque, New Mexico, is the setting for the third annual Women-Church Convergence. Goals for the meeting include putting forth a vision of Women-Church,

addressing the economic, political, sexual, and spiritual lives of women, and celebrating through prayer, symbol, song, and story. Women interested in a global, ecumenical movement of feminist-based communities of justice seeking friends who engage in sacrament and solidarity are encouraged to write Roz Ostendorf, Women-Church Convergence, 3915 Kingman Blvd., Des Moines, IA 50311.

ABC Annual Retreat

JUNE 26-29, American Baptists Concerned hosts its annual retreat in the San Francisco Bay Area. For information contact American Baptists Concerned, 872 Erie St., Oakland, CA 94610.

Gay and Lesbian Parents Meet

JULY 2-4, Hundreds of lesbian moms, gay dads and their children will meet in Orlando, Florida for the 14th annual conference of the Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition. "Share the Love... Share the Magic!" is the theme. The Clarion Hotel is the setting, providing opportunity to visit the Disney attractions. For information contact GLPCI '93, Box 561504, Orlando, FL 32856-1504, (407)420-2191.

"Partners for the Glory of God"

JULY 15-20, The Gay and Lesbian Affirming Disciples Alliance and the United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns will sponsor joint activities during the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ biennial General Assembly (Disciples) and General Synod (UCC) at the Cervantes Convention Center in St. Louis. Michael and Katherine Kinnamon are scheduled to speak at a Saturday evening banquet. For information, contact Randy Palmer at (319)332-6245.

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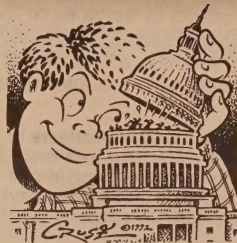
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Paris MCC recognized

ACENTRE de l'ESPRIT LIBERATEUR Metropolitan Community Church in Paris has become a registered church in France. Ms. Caroline DeBlanco, pastor, said that the church's bylaws were reviewed "with a fine-toothed comb" by the prefect of police and by the Minister of the Interior. DeBlanco said that between 15 and 30 people attend services, and the church averages 10 services per month. -*Keeping in Touch*

Anita C. Hill honored

ANITA C. HILL recently received the Voice of the Spirit Award from the Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministry in San Francisco. Hill was recognized on November 7, 1992 at the LLGM Voices of Distinction event for her work with St. Paul-Reformation's Wingspan Ministry, and for her "spiritual advocacy" on behalf of gay, lesbian and bisexual people in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Hill served as Ministry Associate with Wingspan Ministry from 1983-1990 and is a member of the ELCA Task Force on Human Sexuality. She is currently employed by Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota as coordinator of AIDS Ministry and is an educator/counselor in the HIV/AIDS and Anti-Homophobia Training Program of Family Service, Inc. in St. Paul.

For information about the Lutheran Lesbian and Gay Ministry or the Voices of Distinction awards contact Rev. Ruth Frost, Rev. Jeff Johnson or Rev. Phyllis Zillhart, (415)553-4026.

New Life MCC receives charter

NEW LIFE METROPOLITAN Community Church, Charlotte, N.C., has been given "charter church" status in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. The charter was presented to Pastor Robert Carl Darst by the Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson during the business meeting of the Gulf Lower Atlantic District of the UFMCC at its recent meeting in Raleigh, N.C. Fourteen members of New Life traveled to Raleigh to be present at the event which took place at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church. New Life MCC will celebrate its ninth anniversary on January 30. -*Q Notes*

Group formed for gay Lutheran clergy, church professionals

AWINGSPAN MINISTRY of St. Paul Reformation Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn., has helped launch a new group known as Uncommon Call, which is composed of clergy, seminarians, and other church professionals, all of whom identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. The group

draws its membership from Regions 3 and 5 of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Leo Treadway, spokesperson for Uncommon Call, said "As this organization draws increasing numbers of church professionals who feel that the church has run roughshod over them, their lives, and their ministries, Uncommon Call may become a force to be reckoned with." He said the church, confronted by significant numbers, will have to face the shortsightedness of past strategies and own up to the pain it has inflicted on countless individuals. For information on Uncommon Call, call (612)224-3371. -*Equal Time*

South Carolina MCC triples membership

MEMBERSHIP HAS TRIPLED from 31 to 93 at MCC Charleston, SC, since Ms. Mary Moore became pastor two years ago. "The biggest single reason for the growth is the empty chair," Ms. Moore said. "At every meeting we have set aside an empty chair to acknowledge the people who are not yet there. When a new member joins, we tell them, 'Someone else paid for your chair. Will you provide a place for the next person?'" That philosophy of making space to welcome new members is described in a new book that Moore highly recommends, *Preparing the Church for the Future* by Carl George. She also credits the church's growth to strong, mature lay leadership in the congregation.

-*Keeping in Touch*

New pastor, new building for MCC/Baltimore

AFTER A PERIOD OF nearly two years without a regular pastor, the Metropolitan Community Church of Baltimore has selected the Rev. Joseph Totten-Reid to lead the congregation. Rev. Totten-Reid had pastored the MCC in Santa Barbara since 1987. His arrival coincides with another landmark change for the church. Beginning with the Christmas Eve service, MCC/Baltimore

began worshipping in its own church building, Waverly Chapel, the former home of the Waverly Presbyterian Church. -*Baltimore Alternative*

New More Light church

ATHE SESSION OF CHRIST Presbyterian Church in Terra Linda adopted a More Light statement on June 9, 1992, becoming a More Light Congregation welcoming of gay, lesbian, and bisexual members. The statement reads, in part, "All who confess their faith in Christ and wish to be His disciples are welcome to membership. This includes people of all races, people of all social or economic states, handicapped people, single people, married people, gay or lesbian people."

BMC meets in Denver

OVER 140 PEOPLE ATTENDED the Fourth International Convention of the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns in Denver, Colorado, October 9-12. The convention marked a maturing for BMC in a number of ways. The decision to hold the convention in the west, away from BMC's strong base in the east, allowed many from the western part of North America to attend, which the group hopes will lead to a stronger BMC presence there. The women's contingent at the convention was very strong, and women provide leadership in ways that have moved the group much closer to equality. The Brethren presence was strong, and included a meeting where Church of the Brethren concerns were discussed. An auction was held which raised over \$4600 for the convention travel fund and for the BMC's Linscheid Memorial Endowment Fund.

New Pentecostal church for Vermont

ATHE NATIONAL GAY Pentecostal Alliance has announced the formation of Resurrection Apostolic Ministries in

Burlington, Vermont. The mission is the first NGPA work in New England, and joins other NGPA churches, Lighthouse Apostolic Church in Schenectady, N.Y., and Casa de la Paloma Apostolic Church in Tucson, Ariz. The NGPA was founded in Schenectady in 1980 and has churches, missions and ministers from Arizona to West Africa. It operates a school for training clergy and publishes a bimonthly newsletter. For information on Resurrection Apostolic Ministries contact the pastor, Sr. Miki Thomas, P.O. Box 162, Essex Jct., VT 05452.

Rev. David Eckert passes

AREV. DAVID K. ECKERT, interim pastor of Delta Harvest MCC, Stockton, Cal., passed away on Oct. 25, 1992. Eckert was very active in the fight for civil rights of lesbian and gay military persons. He had a distinguished military career. Eckert was licensed as a pastor in the UFMCC in July, 1991. He leaves behind his life partner, Bill Weaver, two daughters Elisa Anne and Angela Christine, and his supportive former wife, Beverly, of Orangevale, Cal.

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HUTSVILLE, From Page 13

in a home with doors and windows and furniture that's just yours?" -*Liz Lapidus and KC Wildmoon*

EPILOGUE: Hutsville, which some say was over 25 years old, exists no more. The community was razed in preparation for the opening of the Georgia Dome. Sources say the city of Atlanta was fair in offering housing and opportunities.

This article first appeared last spring in Southern Voice. Reprinted with permission.

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General Interest

IF YOU HAVE READ "The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ" by Levi, I am interested in corresponding and discussing. W. Courson, P.O. Box 1974, Bloomfield, NJ 07003. 6/93

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LAUNCH,

From Page 7

of SPCK, and a Christian not known for his wholehearted acceptance of gay and lesbian people, about the book. In his reply to the board, he admitted he had not read the whole book, but said some prayers might "foster the myth that HIV and AIDS are confined to the homosexual community." The Rev. Peter D'Driscoll, chair of the Daring to Speak Coalition, demanded, "Where were the Archbishop and the Church when the media were fostering that myth?" Carey suggested he might resign as President "if a divergence... in editorial policy were frequently repeated." The board withdrew its commission, leaving Dr. Stuart and the book in the wilderness. But she did not slink away, as the resulting media coverage last March made clear.

Bishop Spong noted that there was a blessing in the entire situation. Because of the attention given to the suppression of the book by SPCK, it will now be more widely known and available through Hamish Hamilton's sponsorship.

Dr. Stuart said she had learned a valuable lesson from the upheaval: "We will never allow ourselves to be treated like that again," to which a cheering audience replied, "Amen!"

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COMMENT

From Page 4

churches who would be part of this flow and movement of God would be those churches who received homosexuals. He said that just as in the Jesus movement of the 1970's, those churches who received hippies were the blessed churches, and those who wouldn't receive them missed this move of God. So it would be, Benny Hinn said, that those churches which would not accept homosexuals into their churches would miss the greatest outpouring of the Spirit yet. Therefore, Hinn stated, he began to pray for God to bring homosexuals into his church. I'm not sure he fully understood what God was showing him, but he never stated that God was going to make heterosexuals out of these homosexuals.

In the January/February, 1990 issue of *Ministries Today* the "insiders report" revealed that "respected Bible teacher John Sanford from Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, writing to charismatic Southern Baptists in the fullness fellowship *Communique* newsletter lists what he believes will be "significant changes to take place in the 90's." One of the changes Sanford expects is to "see the exaltation of eunuch ministries based on Matthew 19:12."

On September 22, 1992 the pastor of a large charismatic church in Pittsburgh, Penn., stated that in their early morning prayer time, the church prays that the North, South, East and West would give up souls held in captivity. But one morning God spoke to him and said "I have a group of people you're not praying into the church." He asked God who that might be and God said "the homosexuals." So now Covenant Church of Pittsburgh is praying for God to send in homosexuals.

He shared at the International Ministers Forum annual convention in Dayton, Ohio in September, 1992 that "God is bringing a paradigm shift to the church." We are beginning to travel on new ground. This same pastor from Pittsburgh told the pentecostal pastors assembled in Dayton that he had a problem with people making statements like "if God doesn't judge San Francisco for its homosexuality, He'll have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah," because, he said, "Sodom and Gomorrah were never destroyed for homosexuality at all. According to Ezekiel 16:49 they were destroyed for inhospitality and an attitude problem, which sounds like the church today." Many pastors at the IMF convention, on hearing this, grabbed pens and paper to make note of this scripture reference.

God is doing a sovereign work in the earth that is just beginning to be understood, though the groundwork has been laid for the last two and a half decades.

Be ready for God to do a new thing in the earth. Expect miracles. There is only one flock, with one Shepherd, one Body of Christ. No longer can the unappreciated remain ignored, amputated and screaming, "Behold I am a dry tree." But Isaiah 56:7 prophecies "for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." So be it, Lord, Jesus. So be it. When? God says soon. But God's impression of time is not the same as ours. All we know is that it's coming. Soon.

Rev. Samuel Kader is co-founder and pastor of Community Gospel Church in Dayton, Ohio. The Dayton church, a gay-positive, full gospel church is soon to celebrate its 7th anniversary. Pastor Kader has been a conference speaker in the gay/lesbian community since 1975.

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